National Practitioner Data Bank—Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank

# NPDB-HIPDB
# Data Bank News

## January 2003

### Inside this issue:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
**HRSA**
Health Resources & Services Administration

## Section 1921:
## Possible Expansion of the NPDB

Implementation of Section 1921 of the *Social Security Act* would expand querying of and reporting to the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB). The date of implementation, however, has not yet been determined.

**What is Section 1921?**

Congress authorized the NPDB's expansion by passing Section 5(b) of Public Law 100-93, the *Medicare and Medicaid Patient and Program Protection Act of 1987*, as amended (also referred to as Section 1921 of the *Social Security Act*). Under the authority of Section 1921, the NPDB will collect information concerning certain actions taken by State licensing authorities, private accreditation organizations, and Quality Improvement Organizations (formerly known as Peer Review Organizations) against health care practitioners and health care entities. Section 1921 is intended to protect beneficiaries participating in the *Social Security Act*'s health care programs from unfit health care practitioners and entities and improve the anti-fraud provisions of these programs.

## Helpful Hints from the Data Banks

✓ **BILLING HISTORY MUST BE CHECKED BEFORE THE 60-DAY WINDOW IS CLOSED**

Did you know that transactions are cleared from the *Billing History* screen every 60 days? In order to view and print the billing records of a transaction with the Data Banks, you must check the screen within 60 days of the transaction. To view your billing history, follow these steps:

- Log on to the IQRS, available at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*.

- On the *Entity Registration Confirmation* screen, click **Continue**.

- On the *Options* screen, click **View Billing History**.

✓ **BILLING ERRORS MUST BE REPORTED IN WRITING**

If you discover a billing error, you must notify the Data Banks in writing. All correspondence should include your DBID, date(s) of query(ies) or report(s) in which a billing error has been identified, DCN(s) if available, and the reason for the credit request. The request may be faxed to 703-802-4109 or mailed to NPDB-HIPDB, P.O. Box 10832, Chantilly, VA 20153-0832.

✓ **USE ITP FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF QUERIES AND REPORTS**

For entities that generate a large number of queries and reports from third-party or other special-purpose software, the Interface Control Document Transfer Protocol (ITP)

# IQRS User Review Panel Meeting

The Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) User Review Panel (URP) met on Thursday, October 17, 2002, in Fairfax, Virginia. The IQRS URP is a forum where users of the NPDB-HIPDB can gather to openly discuss their ideas about past, present, and future IQRS and Data Bank operations.

The primary mission of the IQRS URP is to: discuss issues regarding IQRS, IQRS requirements, and reporting issues; and address NPDB-HIPDB operational issues.

A variety of entities representing queriers and reporters attended the meeting. Agenda items included: an update to the IQRS URP members concerning actions taken on their recommendations from the previous meeting; Data Bank performance and system improvements; possible Section 1921 implementation; planned IQRS software enhancements and future system considerations; and demonstrations of the information web site and the customer relations management system used by the Data Banks' Customer Service Center.

The Data Banks solicited user comments, and the URP responded throughout the interactive meeting. User recommendations were recorded for review and possible future implementation.

Thank you to all those who participated, and we hope to see you at the next IQRS URP meeting, tentatively scheduled for fall 2003. ⚕

## Helpful Hints *from page 1*

program is an alternative way to submit multiple queries or reports in data files. Information on the ITP program is available at *www.npdb-hipdb.com/ icd.html.* To submit files through the ITP, files must be formatted to the specifications in the "Interface Control Documents (ICDs)." The ICDs provide information about the format, structure, and content of electronic files for submitting queries and reports. ITP instructions and the necessary class and Java files to transfer ICDs are also available for download.

For further information on the ITP program, contact the Customer Service Center at 1-800-767-6732.

### ✔ CHECK YOUR EFT ACCOUNT BALANCE

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) users: To limit disruption to your account, be sure there are sufficient funds in your account before submitting queries to the Data Banks. Please note that the Data Banks do not keep track of your current EFT balances; check with your bank for that information.

### ✔ KEEP EFT ACCOUNTS UP-TO-DATE

If you use EFT as your method of payment for queries, please remember: If your EFT account information changes for any reason, you must modify that information through the IQRS. Information such as account or routing number needs to be kept up-to-date, or your queries will be rejected.

To update EFT account information:

- Log on to the IQRS, available at *www.npdb-hipdb.com*.

- Click **Administrator Options**.

- On the *Administrator Options* screen, click **Authorize EFT**.

- On the *EFT Options* screen, click **Modify EFT** and enter the correct information.

- A formatted document with a 15-digit Data Bank Control Number (DCN) in the upper right-hand corner should appear. Print the document (which must be signed by the certifying official), attach a voided check, and mail to the Data Banks for processing. Be sure that all necessary information has been included. Missing documentation will cause a delay in processing your EFT information.

The Data Banks will notify you through the IQRS that your account has been updated. When you log in, you will receive a message to go to the *Data Bank Correspondence* screen. You will be notified of your account changes in addition to receiving any other correspondence you may have.

### ✔ CHECK DATA BANK CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE LATEST NEWS

Did you know that all IQRS users are now able to access Data Bank Correspondence from the *Entity Registration Confirmation* page? Once you log into the system, you will receive a link to Data Bank Correspondence if new correspondence has been placed there for you. The link provides information on upcoming events, messages from the Data Banks, and access to the latest edition of this newsletter, which may be printed for future reference. Previously, account administrators were the only users receiving this correspondence. Now this information is available to all users of the IQRS. ⚕

# IQRS Refreshes Its Look

This coming April, the Integrated Querying and Reporting Service (IQRS) will debut new screens, coordinating with the look of the NPDB-HIPDB web site. The new IQRS appearance will facilitate easy review of information, improve navigation, and simplify use for persons with disabilities. You will be able to quickly locate the functions you need - whether you've come to the IQRS to query, to report, or to maintain your subject database.
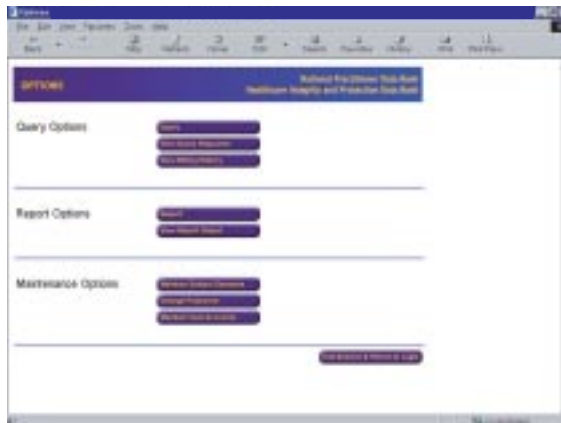
The new IQRS screens will feature a white background; this helps make the text more visible and legible. Another new and helpful feature of the IQRS is the yellow-colored **Help** buttons, which make it easier to find information and instructions pertaining to each screen.

The help files will no longer display in frames (i.e., sections separated by a scroll bar within a screen). This



*Figure 1. New IQRS Options Screen*

frameless design allows easy scanning and printing. The help files will still display in a separate pop-up window so that you can continue with your current IQRS session.

The new screens will also feature well-placed **Home** buttons – so that you can find your way back to the NPDB-HIPDB home page easily.

The new *Options* screen, shown in Figure 1, will soon feature grouped options. Options will be organized based on the purpose of the user's visit (reporting, querying, or maintenance). The new appearance of the *Options* screen will help you accomplish your goals quickly. The overall usability will be improved with the IQRS sharing the look and feel of *www.npdb-hipdb.com*.

# NPDB Executive Committee Meeting

The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) Executive Committee met on Thursday, November 7, 2002, at the Sheraton Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The Executive Committee is composed of representatives of the major NPDB constituencies, including hospitals and other health care entities, State medical and dental licensing boards, professional societies, and medical malpractice payers. Accreditation organizations, practitioner groups, and Federal agencies were also represented. The Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Associate Administrator for the Bureau of Health Professions (BHPr) also took part in the meeting.

The Committee's mandate is to provide guidance to the NPDB contractor, SRA International, Inc. The Committee is chaired by Ms. Jodi Schirling, National Association Medical Staff Services and Manager, Corporate Credentialing, The Nemours Foundation. The Committee Vice-Chairman is Dr. Norman Odyniec, American College of Surgeons. Both Ms. Schirling and Dr. Odyniec were re-elected to their respective offices for a 2-year term.

The Committee was updated on the major Government initiatives in which HRSA, BHPr, and the Division of Practitioner Data Banks (DPDB) are involved. Both DPDB and SRA International, Inc. delivered status reports on

NPDB finances and operations. Other agenda items included: a presentation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) on their temporary disaster privileging standards, and discussion of possible Section 1921 implementation and a possible revision of the Data Banks' policy on the reporting of Loss Adjustment Expenses (LAEs). An overview of the Practitioner Remediation and Enhancement Partnership (PREP) and a report on the IQRS User Review Panel meeting were also presented.

The Executive Committee will next meet on Tuesday, May 13, 2003.

*Section 1921* from page 1

**Who will report under Section 1921, and what information will be reported?**

Each State will be required to adopt a system of reporting the following information to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services:

- Certain adverse State licensure actions taken against a health care practitioner or entity.

- Any negative action or finding taken by a State licensing authority against a health care practitioner or entity.

- Any negative action or finding taken by a quality improvement organization against a health care practitioner or entity.

- Any negative action or finding taken by a private accreditation organization against a health care entity.

**Who can query Section 1921 information?**

Entities currently eligible under Title IV to receive information from the NPDB will be eligible to receive Section 1921 information. This means, for example, that hospitals will have access to licensure reports on all types of practitioners, not just physicians and dentists.

The following entities will only have access to information reported to the NPDB under Section 1921:

- Agencies and contractors administering Federal health care programs.

- State agencies administering State health care programs.

- State Medicaid Fraud Control Units.

- State health care entity licensing boards.

- U.S. Comptroller General.

- U.S. Attorney and other law enforcement agencies.

- Quality Improvement Organizations.

A health care practitioner or a health care entity can receive his, her, or its own Section 1921 information. Section 1921 information will not be available to the general public.

Implementation of Section 1921 will allow a greater number of entities to have access to critical information. The impact on most reporters will be minimal since most Section 1921 information is already reported to the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank.

# Credit Card Querying Tips

If you use a credit card to pay for queries, you may need to contact your credit card company to set up your account according to your querying needs with the Data Bank(s). This will avoid difficulties in processing later.

The Data Banks suggest you discuss the following issues with your credit card company:

- Some credit card companies set a limit on how often your card can be accessed within the same day and will reject payment for queries when you exceed that limit. If this happens, your query response will not be issued to you. If you submit multiple queries, set up your account for maximum usage each day.

- If you are querying the NPDB and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB), make sure your credit card company is aware of the types of charges that will be assessed. Let your credit card company know that the NPDB and HIPDB will each charge $5.00 per subject name, so it will not think that the charges are duplicated and reject the charges.

- Ask your credit card company about its fraud detection procedures. Some credit card companies will not pay for charges if they see the same amount charged more than twice from the same company.

- If you have a monthly limit on your account and you are not sure if you have available funds left, contact your credit card company prior to making your query request and/or print out your billing history with the Data Banks to determine the total funds spent. Please note that there is a 60-day window in which you may check your billing history.

Calling your credit card company before you query can save time later.

# Upcoming: On-Line Registration Capabilities!

In June, the Data Banks will introduce on-line entity and authorized agent registration. The on-line registration capability will be accessible from the NPDB-HIPDB home page, *www.npdb-hipdb.com*, and will replace the current paper registration forms and paper-based registration process.

Registration is simplified with on-line registration. Entities and agents start at the home page, click **Get NPDB-HIPDB Forms**, and, based on whether they're a newly registering authorized agent or entity, click the link for the *Authorized Agent Registration* form or *Entity Registration* form (*see* Figures 2 and 3). The on-line registration input form promptly displays on the screen for completion.

On-screen instructions are provided, along with multiple Help buttons, offering the entity or agent guidance for completing each particular section of their respective registration form (e.g., Eligibility/Statutory Authority, Primary Function of Entity). The instructions and valuable information in the help files provide immediate assistance, enabling successful registration with one or both of the Data Banks.

After completing the registration input form, the screens instruct entities and agents to print two copies of the form, sign and date one copy (keeping the other copy for their records), and mail the signed form to the Data Banks for processing. Mailing a signed copy to the Data Banks is required



*Figure 2. Agent Registration Screen.*



*Figure 3. Entity Registration Screen.*

because they must have an original signature on file for registrations. The entity or agent receives mailed copies of notification once the registration has been fully processed by the Data Banks.

In addition to upcoming on-line registration, entities and agents can soon initiate more substantial profile updates on-line. The new screens will enable updates of significant data elements (i.e., Name of Entity, Eligibility/ Statutory Authority, Query Options for Entities Authorized by Law to Query Both the NPDB and the HIPDB) that are kept on file for each particular entity or agent. These updates will also offer registrants a welcome change from the current paper-based system. ⚕

# Ensuring Accurate and Confidential Report Information

The Data Banks are currently reviewing Subject Statements in order to verify that confidential identifying information, such as a patient's name or address, does not appear within a report. This system-wide review effort will remove any confidential information that was previously submitted in a Subject Statement.

If a report subject (e.g., a practitioner or an organization) asks reporting entities why identifying information was removed from a Subject Statement, they should refer the subject to the Data Bank website, *www.npdb-hipdb.com*, which contains a *Fact Sheet on the Dispute Process* and other related information.

In addition to reviewing Subject Statements in reports, the Data Banks are conducting an ongoing effort to ensure the accuracy of information provided in reports. In the event that incorrect subject information is submitted in a report (i.e., State license number, date of birth), the Data Banks will facilitate corrections by contacting the reporting entity for prompt resolution of the discrepancy. ⚕

## On the Horizon

Beginning in June, entities may be able to initiate a broader array of registration updates through the IQRS. This feature will make entity registration updates and changes easier to complete. Please note that, while many types of updates may be initiated on-line, original signatures will still be required for some actions. For updates of certain information (e.g., Statutory Authority, Name of Entity), an on-line update form will need to be printed, signed, and mailed to the Data Banks for processing. The IQRS will provide guidance on which updates require an original signature. ⚕

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